

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester

City Council Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

Monday, August 3, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. called the meeting to order.

Attendees

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3

Councilman Nykemius J. Hamilton, Sr., Ward 4

City Manager Chris Davis

Assistant City Manager Richie Childers

Assistant City Manager Tanita Norris

City Attorney Lester Castellow

City Clerk Markesha Bivens

Invocation/Pledge

Dr. Willie Mae Marlin

Agenda

Upon request to add a second presentation: Finance Department, Councilman Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Councilman Giddens seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

Minutes

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Hamilton, the May 4, 2026, and May 18, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes were approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

Presentation

Worth County Economic Development Authority (EDA)

Mrs. Karen Rackely, Executive Director of the Worth County Economic Development Authority (EDA), presented the results of a documentary highlighting the community. In April, filming took place throughout Worth County and included interviews, downtown activities, and other community events as part of the *Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid* series. The program focused on community development, local municipalities, and community organizations. The commercial is 30 seconds long, and the documentary is five (5) minutes long. Both are available on YouTube and the EDA website at <https://chooseworth.com>.

City of Sylvester Finance Department

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. presented Mr. Johnathan McDaniel, Accounting Coordinator; Ms. Tanita Norris, Assistant City Manager/Human Resource Director; and Mrs. Shelia Pullins, Finance Officer, with certificates recognizing their completion of the coursework and examination requirements for the Local Government Finance Officer Level 1 certification with the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

Speakers Appearance

Sylvester citizen Mrs. Kimberly Williams addressed Mayor and Council regarding concerns about an odor near the Town Creek Pond. It was advised that the South Pond has been affected by an intrusive weed that has grown in the area, possibly originating from the manufacturing plant. The pond was tested, and the appropriate chemicals have been ordered to address the issue and eliminate the odor.

Mrs. Kayla Hope, writer for the *Sylvester Local Newspaper*, introduced herself to the meeting attendees and discussed her desire to educate senior citizens in the community about Medicare. She expressed an interest in holding a seminar at the Mary Alice Shipp Center during the Wednesday Senior Center event, on days when seniors visit Dr. Marlin in the future.

Unfinished Business

A. Rezoning Request of Parcel SV090103 from R1-A to R1

Mrs. Ebony Moore, Community Development Director, referenced the request from Mr. Hal Carter, owner of Parcel No. SV090103, to rezone 6.53 acres on Miles Street from R-1A to R-1 for residential development. Mr. Carter submitted the application on May 24, 2026, following a survey completed on May 4, 2024, which indicated that incorrect zoning information had originally been provided to the owner at the time of the survey.

The proposed rezoning would change the parcel from the large-lot R-1A requirements to the standard R-1 regulations, allowing for a more compact layout with a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet, 20-foot front and rear building setbacks, and 8-foot side setbacks.

The Planning Commission previously denied the rezoning request. City Council determined that additional information was needed before making a final decision and tabled the item.

After further discussion comparing nearby neighborhoods, newly constructed property, and other homes within the community, as well as a visual inspection of the parcel on Miles Street, Councilman Jackson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Giddens, to approve the request to rezone Parcel No. SV090103 from R-1A to R-1. Voting in favor were Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. Mayor Proctor opposed. The motion carried, 4-1.

B. Worth Rams Touchdown Club 2026 Sponsorship

City Manager Chris Davis revisited the 2026 Touchdown Club Sponsorship request from a previous Council meeting agenda. He reviewed the sponsorship levels and the City's historical funding, including the \$3,000 Exclusive Ram Sponsorship.

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the Exclusive Ram Sponsorship for the Worth Rams Touchdown Club was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

New Business

A. Worth Rams Alumni Weekend Events

and Council regarding requests for events and road closures for the Worth Rams Alumni Weekend, scheduled for October 23–24, 2026, at the Henry Hall Woolard Center and J. W. Holley Grounds. They stated that the request is the same as last year's event, which was successful. An outdoor gathering (block party) will be held on Friday with paid security, and the organizers have provided a traffic plan. A tailgate event will be held on Saturday at the ball fields and track area. Further discussion included increased police patrol around the outer perimeter, censored music, use of one music source, designated parking areas with traffic directors, and providing electrical power one week prior to the event.

Upon motion by Councilman Hamilton, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the Worth Rams Alumni Weekend events were approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

B. Swine Festival Concert & BBQ Cook-Off 2026

Mrs. Karen Singletary, MainStreet Director, requested approval of a partial road closure of one (1) block of Front Street for the 2026 Swine Festival Concert & BBQ Cook-Off, scheduled for August 21–22, 2026. The event will include a free concert at the Pedestrian Mall featuring Jordan Poole on Friday and a BBQ competition on Saturday. Mrs. Singletary requested that Front Street be closed beginning Friday at 2:00 p.m. through the completion of judging on Saturday at 4:00 p.m. The closure is intended to provide additional vendor space, extending from the area near City Hall to the alley just before Carlton's Hamburgers & Hotdogs.

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the requested partial road closure of one (1) block of Front Street for the Swine Festival Concert & BBQ Cook-Off 2026 was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

C. 2026 Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) Grant Project Package

Mrs. Ebony Moore, Community Development Director, provided details regarding the Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) Grant and its purpose. She explained that the CHIP Grant was created by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to assist local governments in developing or preserving housing within their communities. Homeowners must reside within the City limits, meet HUD income requirements for Worth County, and apply and submit the required documentation to secure federal funding.

The funding is used to make necessary home repairs that improve safety, accessibility, and living conditions. Federal guidelines require specific documentation for audits and allow the City to partner with the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SWGRC).

Resolutions 2026-06 through 2026-11 are six (6) related resolutions that address the various components of the CHIP Grant Project Package, including local housing policies, property values, and agreements that allow the City to partner with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SWGRC). Staff recommended approval of the 2026 CHIP Grant Project Package, including Resolutions 2026-06 through 2026-11, which were provided to the Mayor, Council, and City Manager for consideration and approval to proceed with the grant process.

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson, with second by Councilman Giddens, the 2026 CHIP Grant Project Package with Resolutions 2026-06 through 2026-11 was approved. Voting in favor were Mayor Proctor and Councilmen Giddens, Hamilton, Jackson, and Powell. The motion carried, 5-0.

D. Pope Park Lease

Mr. Davis presented details of a lease submitted for consideration by USA Scout Baseball to utilize Pope Park. The annual rent for Pope Park would be \$500.00 for the period of August 2026 through June 2027, with the lessee responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the fields, relieving the City of this responsibility.

After further discussion, it was determined that the lessee requested exclusive possession of Pope Park, which would not allow others to use the property. Mayor and Council decided to table the agenda item pending review by Attorney Castellow. No action was taken on the agenda item.

E. Discussion: Sylvester-Worth County Recreation Board

City Manager Chris Davis provided details regarding a discussion with Interim County Administrator Ben Barbee concerning the reinstatement of the Sylvester-Worth County Recreation Board. Historically, the Board met but was dissolved, and the County is considering its reinstatement. It was proposed that the Board consist of two (2) members appointed by the County, two (2) members appointed by the City, and one (1) at-large member to participate in decision-making, planning, and other recreation-related matters. Following discussion regarding transparency, community involvement, the number of board members, and the Recreation Department Director's previous attendance at Council meetings, Mayor and Council unanimously agreed to reinstate the Sylvester-Worth County Recreation Board.

Reports/Remarks

Councilman J. Mark Giddens had no report.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr. had no report.

Councilman Nykemius J. Hamilton, Sr. had no report.

Councilman Melvin Powell inquired about funding to develop and improve Ward 1. A conversation with the Worth County Sheriff brought attention to the ditch behind the new jail location that needs evaluation. This will be studied in the next few months.

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. requested an update on the playground equipment at Jeffords Park. Staff advised that funding is needed to make upgrades to the park. Discussion also included the repair and replacement of equipment as part of routine day-to-day maintenance.

City Attorney Lester Castellow had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis had no report.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Adjournment

With all agenda items addressed, Mayor and Council voted to adjourn the City Council Meeting. The motion carried, unanimously, 5-0.

Mayor Proctor adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

ATTEST:

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK